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Testimony of Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association

Public Hearing Subject Matter	Position
Raised SB 998: AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO ENVIRONMENT RELATED STATUTES.	Support (especially sections 7-10)

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is the first conservation organization established in Connecticut in 1895. For over 120 years, CFPA has offered testimony before the General Assembly on various sustainable forestry, State Park and Forest, trail recreation, and land conservation issues.

We thank the Environment Committee for raising **SB 998**, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to Environment Related Statutes. CFPA supports the passage of the entire bill, and we have a particular interest in the passage of sections 7-10 of this bill.

CFPA has been represented on the Forest Practices Advisory Board from its very beginning, and we strongly support the subtle but important changes being proposed in SB 998. The bill would accomplish the following:

- Section 7. Allow DEEP to more efficiently acquire outside assistance to combat, control, or prevent forest fires from states participating in the Northeastern Interstate Forest Fire Protection Compact;
- Section 8. Authorize DEEP to grant a 60-day grace period to a forest practitioner who is renewing their certification to avoid the current requirement which would call for a “back to square one” re-examination if the renewal period is exceeded. This is a common sense change that should also save precious time for both DEEP and Forest Practitioners;
- Section 8. Allow other exams such as a certification exam given by the Society of American Foresters or by another state with which Connecticut has a reciprocal relationship, to potentially qualify for Connecticut forestry certification.
- Section 9 & 10. Reduce the administrative burden on DEEP to document continued professional education standards by allowing applicants to attest to meeting them and provide proof upon request; and allow for the renewal of lapsed certifications with payment of a late fee.

** We also suggest that the text from **HB 6004**, An Act Concerning the Qualifications for Membership on the Forest Practices Advisory Board, should be added to SB 998 (this language was included in a similar bill, SB 834, introduced in 2017). H.B. 6004 would clarify the appointment authorities and subject proficiency areas for members of the Forest Practices Advisory Board, and it is also a technical correction that is not controversial.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony, and I am glad to respond to any questions you may have.